

Washington, DC – Today, Congressman Earl Blumenauer issued the following statement in response to the energy priorities outlined in the President’s speech at Georgetown University:

“President Obama’s plan for a secure energy future points our country in the right direction on energy use and gives an honest treatment of the hard decisions ahead for our nation. The sudden upswing in gas prices this year has reminded all of us how sensitive oil prices are to political insecurity in the Mideast, and how vulnerable our country is to oil price fluctuations.

“The goal outlined in President Obama’s speech would cut American oil imports to one third of 2008 levels by 2025—a reduction equal to 3.6 million barrels per day. This is the right direction for our energy security and for our trade deficit, 40 percent of which results from petroleum imports. However, we must go further if we are serious about protecting our country from dependence on foreign oil. Our oil imports have been falling due in part to energy efficiency measures promoted by the Obama Administration –already since 2008 our oil imports are down by 1 million barrels per day. We should set more ambitious goals not only for oil imports but also for oil conservation.

“President Obama’s speech outlined four areas of focus to curb U.S. foreign oil dependence -- domestic energy production, more natural gas in vehicles, car and truck efficiency, and use of biofuels. I would suggest that we add a fifth element to this plan, which is support for livable communities that combine smart transportation alternatives, land use and design to keep communities resilient and reduce the impact of high gas prices. The Obama administration’s very own Sustainable Communities Partnership between the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Transportation, and Department of Housing and Urban Development has provided key leadership in this area and has helped communities across the country make investments to provide transportation and housing choices that conserve oil without sacrificing economic growth. Livable, walkable communities benefit local economies, increase quality of life and enable healthy lifestyles.

“The Republican plan is to drill more and to undermine the regulations in place to protect our health and environment. This was their practice for 8 years and we only saw gas prices continue to rise. With only 2 percent of the world’s oil reserves, we will never drill our way to energy independence as long as we continue to use over 20 percent of the world’s oil. Oil is priced on a global market, meaning that additional drilling here will not bring down prices. The only real way to gain independence from oil price shocks is to gain independence from oil.”

